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## THE EDITOR

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DURING the first quarter of a century of the nursing profession, if so we may be allowed to call it, the controlling power of the schools has been, and is now, in the hands of physicians and laymen. During this time the trained nurse has become a recognized factor in medicine and surgery, and an indispensable attendant in the homes of both rich and poor in times of sickness.

Having been for so long a time a recognized force, one would expect that intelligent citizens, at least, would be thoroughly informed as to her proper qualifications. On the contrary, the public are woefully ignorant in regard to the education and requirements of the modern trained nurse.

Any professional man attempting to establish himself in a strange community finds himself obliged to furnish some guarantee, other than his own word, that he is what he pretends to be.

But let any woman go into a community, adopt a nurse's uniform, and call herself a trained nurse, and her statement will be accepted without question by the majority of physicians and the public at large. She may say truthfully that she has received her training in such and such a hospital. She is not required to show her diploma, and need not explain that her "training" may have been that only of a rejected probationer, a discharged pupil for cause, or as a laundress, ward maid, or waitress, her residence in a hospital giving her a certain familiarity with the routine of institution life which enables her to effectually deceive a credulous and confiding people.

Men and women of intelligence are beginning to ask questions that give us hope for the future. We hear questions like this: "What is the need of all this organization among nurses? What do you hope to gain by it?" "We are hearing a great deal of talk about higher education, progress, etc., among nurses. Haven't you schools enough? There are no class of women so busy and so well paid as good nurses."

First we have to recognize the fact that a training-school is the cheapest kind of service that a hospital can obtain for the care of its patients; consequently it is a good financial investment for the institution. The pupil in return for her training gives, with the exception of a few instances, from a nine- to twelve-hour day, involving heavy manual labor, with great nervous strain, and performing for the hospital duties

involving great responsibility not only in the saving of life, but in the care of the expensive hospital equipment.

It is not difficult to understand how the training-school privilege has become so much abused when we consider the great numbers of women who are clamoring for admission to the hospitals for this training. In too many instances, where the institution is poor or where it has been established for commercial purposes, the nurse is worked to the limit of her capacity, while the systematic, practical, and theoretical instruction is disproportionately small. If she is a bright, well balanced, intelligent woman, she absorbs a certain amount of knowledge which she is able to use to advantage in private nursing. Such a woman, with natural dignity and tact, becomes a valuable nurse. Nearly all of the pioneer women of the profession received their training after this manner during the first few years of training-schools, but that period has long since passed. At the present time, the woman to whom we are referring soon becomes conscious of the limitations of her instruction, whereas, if she had served her time in a school of the first grade, she would have become the mistress of her profession. This one successful woman stands in the proportion of one to a hundred in the great numbers who are graduated from all sorts and conditions of so-called schools every year. These women, imperfectly trained after their long, hard service, have been defrauded of their just dues. They have given of their time and strength, but have not received the compensation which is justly theirs.

The remedy for this state of affairs will only come through the efforts of the nurses themselves. Registration, with its two great principles, must bring the needed protection,—first in giving a better training to the nurse of the future, followed by protection to the public and the regular graduate against those same “rejected probationers,” “laundresses,” etc., who are now free to masquerade in a nurse’s uniform. This is the burning question of interest with the British nurses as well as those of America. It may be to some a hackneyed subject, but until registration and the principles involved become a reality, it will be the *alpha* and *omega* of our text.

At the great International Congress of Women held in London last year neither of our national organizations were represented by an official delegate. By invitation, the names of four women identified with the nursing interests of this country were on the programme.

We can hardly agree with our “regular London correspondent” that the gift of oratory is to be found in greater proportion among the nurses of America than with the nurses of Great Britain. Of course, the United States was represented in the general congress by many of

its greatest women orators, Miss Susan B. Anthony, Mrs. May Wright Sewall, and the Reverend Anna Shaw being recognized before the world as women of exceptional brilliancy as public speakers; but in the nursing section and at the annual meeting of the Matrons' Council, which we also had the pleasure of attending, we were impressed with the fact that the gift of public speaking was quite as evenly distributed among the English nurses as it is with us. They have a few brilliant orators; so have we; but the masses of the nurses in both countries, who are plain, executive, hard-working women, find it difficult to express their views before an audience. Moreover, our "regular correspondent," drawing her conclusion, perhaps, from the four women referred to, may not have known that three of those women were British subjects. Our own Miss Dock, God bless her! did us proud upon that occasion, but the grace of oratory of the other three must be accredited to the mother country.

THE study courses for our *alumnæ* associations are being organized for the winter, and one of the subjects universally popular, not only among nurses, but in women's clubs and societies of every description, is that of parliamentary law. We are inclined to think that in too many instances individuals and societies give up the study of this subject when they have mastered the principles of the conduct of a public meeting.

We think there is great need in our nursing societies for more careful study of the duties of officers and members of committees. We are too much inclined, in our busy life, to leave the important work of our organization in the hands of a few, who are naturally leaders and burden-bearers. We believe in the frequent changing of officers and members of committees. With a more thorough knowledge of the duties of officers and committees, a greater number would feel competent to accept office. We should avoid the danger of getting into a rut, of narrowing instead of broadening our influence for good, and effectually prevent our organizations, both local and national, from degenerating into what is known in politics as a "machine." We would like to suggest that this portion of the subject of parliamentary law shall receive greater consideration during the coming year.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING has become a reality, and is receiving praise far beyond our fondest expectations. It is, of course, desirable that the subscription list shall be increased as rapidly as possible, and subscribers wishing the first number must send their names to the publishing house soon, as the first issue is rapidly becoming exhausted.